

Agency: Commerce, Community and Economic Development**Grants to Named Recipients (AS 37.05.316)****Grant Recipient: Volunteers of America - Alaska****Federal Tax ID: 13-1692595****Project Title:****Project Type: Other**

Volunteers of America - Alaska - School-Based Mental Health Services

State Funding Requested: \$960,000**House District: Anchorage Areawide (12-28)**

One-Time Need

Brief Project Description:

This appropriation will fill an anticipated FY23 funding gap, and allow the program to obtain needed funding to continue in FY24 and beyond.

Funding Plan:

Total Project Cost:	\$960,000
Funding Already Secured:	(\$0)
FY2023 State Funding Request:	<u>(\$960,000)</u>
Project Deficit:	\$0

Funding Details:

The expansion for this school year was largely funded by the Municipality of Anchorage using one-time federal funding from the CARES Act and the American Rescue Plan Act. Unfortunately, the funding from the Municipality of Anchorage will be exhausted this year. (It's estimated the funding will be gone by mid-August.)

Detailed Project Description and Justification:

This request seeks to fill a \$960,000 budget gap for a program that provides much-needed mental health services to students in several schools in the Anchorage School District.

The School-Based Mental Health Services Program is run by VOA Alaska and Providence Behavioral Health. The program works in partnership with the Anchorage School District and ASD Alternative Schools.

The program provides mental health services in 10 schools, including intensive services to students who need them. The program currently reaches about 8,000 students.

In the 2019-2020 school year, the program served 4 schools. In the current 2021-2022 school year, the program is serving 10 schools, including Bartlett High School, East High School, West High School, Benny Benson Secondary School, Romig Middle School, Begich Middle School, Wendler Middle School, Tyson Elementary School, Muldoon Elementary School, and Lake Otis Elementary School.

VOA Alaska and Providence Behavioral Health are in conversations with multiple local, state, and federal funding partners to fund the program in FY 24 and beyond:

- o Municipality of Anchorage

For use by Co-chair Staff Only:

- o Anchorage School District
- o Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
- o Federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.
- o Federal Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education grant.

The \$960,000 is a one-time request to fill the program's funding gap for FY 23. Each school site costs approximately \$130,000. That includes a clinician, clinical supervision, program management, and administrative support. Currently, only the costs of the most intensive mental health services can be reimbursed by Medicaid or private insurance. As a result, the targeted and school-wide services are not covered by Medicaid or private insurance.

Services offered through the School-Based Mental Health Program include:

- Drug and alcohol education
- Crisis intervention
- Individual, group, and family therapy
- Mental health and substance abuse counseling
- Case management & resource navigation
- Trainings and support for teachers & school staff

A recent survey found that 81% of stakeholders felt that on-site mental health services had a positive impact on academic performance.

That same survey found that 70% of stakeholders have seen positive changes in their school's climate since the start of onsite mental health services.

80% of educators and administrators reported that their on-site clinicians are viewed as positive resources in their schools.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly 1 in 6 children had enough behavioral or emotional symptoms to meet the criteria to be diagnosed with one or more childhood mental health disorders.

It is estimated that youth experiences with mental health difficulties have doubled during the pandemic.

Right now, there is an urgent need for mental and behavioral health resources specifically targeted at students.

It's estimated that 70% of youth with mental health diagnoses have unmet mental health needs.

Teachers and other educators are rightly focused on education and do not have the capacity and knowledge to effectively meet the mental health needs of students.

The research shows that around half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14.

The School-Based Mental Health Program run by VOA Alaska and Providence Behavioral Health works collaboratively with the schools to enhance the services already offered in each school.

The program works with counselors, teachers, and others to implement strategies and services specifically tailored for each individual school.

Project Timeline:

Funds services provided August 2022 through June 2023, the remainder of the FY23 school year after Municipality funds are exhausted.

Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:

Volunteers of America - Alaska

Grant Recipient Contact Information:

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Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority? ☒ Yes ☐ No